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United States Attends EAS Energy Ministerial

United States Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual led a seven-person interagency delegation at today's East Asia Summit (EAS) Energy Ministerial in Brunei. This was the first such meeting for the United States, which plans to join the regional grouping formally with President Obama's expected attendance at the EAS in Bali in November. Accompanying Ambassador Pascual on the U.S. delegation were U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Daniel L. Shields, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy Phyllis Yoshida, and other representatives from the Department of State and Department of Energy. Dr. Yoshida led the United States delegation to the annual ASEAN-US Senior Officials Meeting on Energy on September 19.

EAS Energy Ministerial meeting attendees, which included delegates from all ten ASEAN nations as well as Russia, Japan, Republic of Korea, China, Australia, New Zealand, and India, welcomed United States participation and commented on the United States' continued and critical role in global energy policy and development. In comments at the meeting, Ambassador Pascual emphasized the need for multilateral cooperation to ensure Asia Pacific countries could meet their energy security challenges in the 21st Century, and that the region remains a strong engine of global economic growth and development.

"The United States is engaged in ASEAN and the East Asia Summit to promote positive and forward looking energy policies. All nations in the region will benefit from policies that both facilitate investment in energy exploration and infrastructure, and create incentives to consume energy in an efficient and sustainable manner," Ambassador Pascual said after the meeting. "The United States -- both our private and public sectors -- wants to be a partner with the region to advance energy security, prosperity and sustainability."

The United States outlined several proposals for supporting ASEAN energy security through a three-year "U.S.-ASEAN Energy Cooperation Work Plan." Formally presented by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy Yoshida at the September 19 U.S.-ASEAN Senior Energy Officials Meeting, the Work Plan proposes programs in energy efficiency, renewable energy, civil nuclear energy and natural gas. These proposals follow a successful program the U.S. Department of Energy conducted with ASEAN last year in the area of energy efficiency standards and labeling

"At the first and second U.S.-ASEAN leaders meetings in 2009 and 2010, our leaders specified energy, including acceleration of the deployment of clean energy technologies, as a particular focus for U.S.-ASEAN cooperation," Dr. Yoshida said. "Effective implementation of this Work Plan will enable us to proceed in a phased way at a pace comfortable to ASEAN members, who are at different levels of development, and in line with the plans ASEAN has in place."

At the EAS Energy Ministerial, Ambassador Pascual underscored that U.S. President Barack Obama will take U.S. engagement in Asia to a new level with his planned participation in the East Asia Summit. Ambassador Pascual and the U.S. delegation in Brunei held bilateral meetings with multiple ASEAN and non-ASEAN counterparts, and conducted several site visits. In addition to the U.S. government delegation in Brunei this week, several American private sector companies are in town to participate in the 2011 ASEAN Energy Business Forum from September 20-22.